ALAMEDA COUNTY WHEELCHAIR AND SCOOTER BREAKDOWN TRANSPORTATION SERVICE

ALAMEDA
County Transportation Commission

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Wheelchair and Scooter Breakdown Transportation Service Manual

History

In 2003 the Paratransit Advisory Planning Committee (PAPCO) identified a need for transportation for wheelchair users who were stranded due to a broken wheelchair. The Committee decided to designate "Gap" funds from the Measure B transportation sales tax funds to meet this need. The program was originally set up to operate through 911 where a police or fire official would determine if the caller required the emergency wheelchair services, and then directly call the transportation provider. MV Transportation would then respond by providing the emergency wheelchair transportation services. Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority (formerly ACTIA, now the Alameda County Transportation Commission or Alameda CTC) provided an 800 number to obtain rides which was not provided to consumers. While this service was a benefit to wheelchair users, police and fire concern over too much use on the 911 system arose, and police and fire officials in Alameda County requested that we modify our program so that only true emergency calls are made on 911.

To respond to police and fire concerns, ACTIA contracted with Direct Line TeleResponse to provide "triage" services for non-life threatening wheelchair breakdowns.

In 2006, PAPCO decided to broaden eligibility and define scooter users as eligible for the service. Additionally, ACTIA contracted with Language 411 to provide interpretation services for non-English speakers. Interpretation services have not proved necessary and that contract has ended. Direct Line occasionally has personnel that can translate, otherwise callers generally find someone to help them communicate. The Wheelchair and Scooter Breakdown Transportation Service (WSBTS) remains essentially the same today, although providers and staff continue to refine procedures and eligibility, and to determine the best way to meet the variety of needs that arise in Alameda County.

Service Description

The Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) sponsors a service called the Wheelchair and Scooter Breakdown Transportation Service (WSBTS) for wheelchair and scooter users in Alameda County that are

stranded due to a mechanical breakdown of their mobility device or a medical emergency. The program provides assistance for two basic scenarios:

1. Transport of a wheelchair or scooter and its owner to a wheelchair/scooter repair shop or other location (as identified by the wheelchair/scooter users) due to mechanical breakdown of the wheelchair or scooter which occurred inside or outside the home.
2. Transport of a wheelchair or scooter to a hospital where the user was transported for an emergency and taken to the hospital without their wheelchair or scooter.

For requests that fall outside of these two scenarios, please refer to the **Detailed Eligibility Examples** listed later in this document.

Service Procedures

The Alameda CTC maintains agreements with Direct Line TeleResponse and MV Transportation. Direct Line TeleResponse forwards a daily email of calls received. MV submits an Invoice monthly that totals rides provided with the WSBTS. Alameda CTC staff uses these resources to troubleshoot issues, monitor usage, and prepare a monthly ridership report.

Service Costs

This service is provided free-of-charge to the consumer and is paid for by Measure B transportation sales tax funds received by the Alameda CTC.

Service Area and Hours of Operation

Consumers must be picked up and dropped off within Alameda County. This service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Due to limited funds for this "emergency" service, consumers are limited to one one-way trip within a day.

How a Ride is Requested

A consumer will call the dedicated phone number (1-877-509-4335 or 1-877-50-Wheel) which goes to Direct Line TeleResponse. On occasion the phone call may be made by a family member, attendant, bystander, or police or fire personnel. The operator receiving the call will ask the caller a series of questions to determine the consumer's eligibility, situation, and location. These questions can include:

- What is your name?
- Are you in a life threatening situation?

- What is a phone number you can be reached at in your current location?
- Are you stuck? Is your chair inoperable?
- Does your wheelchair or scooter fit within the following dimensions as far as you know: does not exceed 30 inches in width and 48 inches in length measured two inches above the ground and does not weight more than 600 pounds when occupied?
- Are you located within Alameda County?
- Can your wheelchair or scooter be rolled manually or loaded into the van in some way?
- What is the address where you are currently located?
- What is your destination? (Typical destinations are home or a repair shop. NOTE: The consumer has the right to choose another destination.)

After determining that the ride is eligible, the operator places the caller on hold and contacts MV Transportation at (510) 895-9924. Direct Line TeleResponse may convey information from MV to the consumer and report back to the consumer, transfer the consumer to MV, or MV may call the consumer directly. Per the Alameda CTC contract with MV Transportation, the ride should arrive within 60 minutes of MV being notified.

Canceling or Changing a Ride

If a ride is no longer needed, the consumer (or requesting party) is asked to inform Direct Line TeleResponse or MV Transportation as soon as that determination is made. Rides that are not cancelled will be charged to the County. Please help us conserve funds by canceling rides in a timely manner.

What assistance can a driver provide?

"Driver Assistance" includes, but is not limited to:

- Making the best effort possible to locate the stranded consumer or mobility device
- Giving the consumer a copy of the Brochure and Resource List
- Helping persons in wheelchairs to maneuver on standard ramps and to and from the main door of their origin or destination.
- Carrying to and from the vehicles no more than 3 grocery bags or similarly sized packages.

Drivers are not permitted to:

- Schedule rides or make unscheduled stops.
- Enter an individual's residence.
- Perform any personal care assistance to consumers, including but not limited to assisting consumers to dress.
- Lift consumers or carry consumers or wheelchairs up or down steps.
- Escort consumers beyond the ground floor lobby of a public building or front door of a residence.
- Accept tips or gratuities.

Service Challenges

Occasionally a WSBTS request or ride will face challenges. These can include miscommunication regarding a consumer's situation, miscommunication between Direct Line and MV, or a consumer who wants to use the program for a reason outside of the service description. The Alameda CTC welcomes compliments, complaints, and suggestions regarding the WSBTS. We are committed to using customer and partner feedback as a tool to improve service quality.

Consumers should expect the following service from the program:

- All staff and drivers are professional and courteous.
- Vehicles will arrive within the designated pick-up window.
- Drivers will assist passengers, when needed, with securing seat belts and mobility devices, operating lifts, escorting riders to and from the vehicle, and carrying packages.
- Lifts shall be operational.
- Paratransit vehicles shall be clean.
- Drivers will be in uniform and will wear photo identification badges.

To assist us in investigating service concerns, please provide us with the following information as soon as possible:

- Consumer's name, address and telephone number
- Date and time of incident
- Details of the incident

All concerns are taken seriously and every effort is made to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Please direct your service compliments, complaints, or suggestions to:

Paratransit Education & Outreach
Alameda CTC
1333 Broadway, Suite 300
Oakland, CA 94612
Phone: 510-208-7467
Email: kpasco@alamedactc.org

Detailed Eligibility Examples

As noted above, staff will receive requests that fall outside of the defined parameters of this program. Alameda County is a very diverse County and residents have a variety of needs that arise. All staff that work with the WSBTS should work with consumers carefully and compassionately to determine if the service can help them. If the service is not appropriate for their needs, staff should attempt to direct the consumer to a solution either by calling the Paratransit Hotline at 1-866-901-7272 or 1-866-901-PARA, or by using the Resource List. The table below provides detailed scenarios of requests for transportation and explanations of eligibility. New and unique situations will always arise, if staff cannot determine eligibility please contact the Alameda CTC.

Example	Eligible for service?	Alternatives/Notes
1. Consumer is out in community and is stranded because wheelchair breaks down	Yes – usually home or repair-shop	• Accessible ramp taxi – see Resource List • For delivery for repair – suggest consumer ask repair shop to pick up, or schedule a regular paratransit ride and go with device (for paratransit referral, see Resource List)
a. Consumer chose to go home, now wants to be taken to repair shop	No – not on same day	
b. Consumer chose to go home, next day wants chair taken to repair shop without them	No – service not for delivery for repair	

Example	Eligible for service?	Alternatives/Notes
2. Consumer is stranded because chair breaks down, but is in unfamiliar area and wants a local repair shop	Yes	• Refer to list of repair shops – see Resource List
3. Consumer is stranded because wheelchair breaks down and requests ride to friends house or Kaiser, instead of usual destinations	Yes – consumer may have repair resources Direct Line or MV are not aware of; if necessary, consumer can be reminded of the one ride per day rule	
4. Consumer calls but operator cannot understand due to caller being a non-English speaker	Depends on situation	• Direct Line occasionally has personnel that can translate; otherwise ask caller to find someone to help communicate
5. Consumer calls but operator cannot understand due to severe speech impediment	Depends on situation	• Ask caller to first call 711 and ask for Speech to Speech, or (800) 854-7784 – and call back with their help
6. Consumer wakes up w/flat tire and wants ride from home to repair shop a. Consumer has had chair repaired and wants to go home	Yes – being non-mobile can still be an emergency, even at home (since paratransit requires one day ahead reservation, consumer could be stranded at home for 2 days) No – not on same day	• After chair repaired, suggest transit • Accessible ramp taxi – see Resource List
7. Consumer has a manual wheelchair that is broken and wants a ride	Yes	• Refer to list of repair shops – see Resource List

Example	Eligible for service?	Alternatives/Notes
8. Consumer has a walker or other aid that is broken and wants a ride	No – this service provides specialized vehicles to transport consumers and mobility devices that cannot go in a standard vehicle (such as a taxi or friend or family member's car) An exception might be made if due to physical limitations, consumer or device cannot fit into a standard vehicle.	• Standard or accessible taxi – see Resource List • Friend or family member's car
9. Consumer took paratransit to library but it's closed, EBP ride isn't for 4 hours, wants to go home	No Consumers may not always be honest in these situations, if inappropriate use is suspected – please notify Alameda CTC staff.	• Consumer can request earlier EBP pick-up, but may not be possible • Suggest transit • Accessible ramp taxi – see Resource List
10. Consumer took personal van to night event, van is broken down and towed, doesn't have a ride home	No – this service is intended to transport consumers who are stranded due to a mechanical breakdown of their wheelchair or scooter or where the consumer was transported for an emergency and taken to the hospital without their wheelchair or scooter	• Suggest transit • Accessible ramp taxi – see Resource List

Example	Eligible for service?	Alternatives/Notes
11. Consumer has medical emergency in community and ambulance comes to get them a. Fire personnel took chair to Fire Admin office, next day attendant is trying to get chair delivered to user's home	Yes – transport mobility device to hospital Yes – transport mobility device to home because it would have been eligible for transport to hospital and because request originates w/police or fire personnel	
12. Consumer has medical emergency at home and ambulance comes to get them, next day need chair in hospital	Yes – transport mobility device to hospital, parallel situation to consumer being stranded at home with broken mobility device Family or attendant will need to coordinate to meet and bring device out of house	
13. Police or fire personnel request transport of consumer and mobility device to shelter after fire or other disaster	Yes – situation qualifies as an emergency and cannot be met by regular paratransit, and because request originates w/police or fire personnel	

Example	Eligible for service?	Alternatives/Notes
14. Consumer owns mobility device and is discharged from hospital without device (device is at home) and wants ride from hospital to home	No – this service provides specialized vehicles to transport mobility devices Also, the Alameda CTC has another program that provides this service, the Hospital Discharge Transportation Service (HDTS), the WSBTS should not be used for hospital discharge trips	• HDTS offers WCs for riding, HDTS not valid at all hospitals – see Resource List • User will have to work with hospital discharge staff
15. Consumer calls frequently and appears to be using service as on-call transportation	Depends on situation Consumers may not always be honest, if inappropriate use is suspected – please notify Alameda CTC staff. Consumers who misuse or abuse service may be suspended from further service.	
16. Consumer treats staff or driver abusively	Please notify Alameda CTC staff. Consumers who misuse or abuse service may be suspended from further service.	
17. Request comes in for gurney transport from Nursing home	No – this service is not intended for medical transportation	• Requestor needs to locate appropriate transportation options/contractors, can contact Alameda CTC for help in finding resources

Example	Eligible for service?	Alternatives/Notes
18. Request comes in from police for prisoner transport to Santa Rita Jail	No – this service is intended to transport consumers who are stranded due to a mechanical breakdown of their wheelchair or scooter or where the consumer was transported for an emergency and taken to the hospital without their wheelchair or scooter	• Requestor needs to locate appropriate transportation options/contractors, can contact Alameda CTC for help in finding resources